



The glass clock on the mantle which exposed all of its gold internals, chimed a bar of sweet music and then returned to its noiseless duty. There was a heavy old Seth Thomas at home which used to tick a rather melancholy rhythm in the room and bellowed out the hours. Dad used to wind it every night. This thing ran a month without assistance, and had such an impudent face that Russ believed it could run eternally without winding. He turned abruptly toward it. He allowed it a scoff and left the room, running dizzily down the spiral staircase built around the central pillar of his modern "celotexed," "tiletexed," "glasstexed," "glazzetexed" home. Once on the street, he glanced back and there in his second floor window the shadow of the green figure was dimly blurred on the blind.

## The Foods of My Childhood

By

**Arleen Wilson**

Brown bread and huge round cheese remind me of Uncle Bob. Chocolate covered cherries make me think of the twinkle in old Mr. McLean's eye whenever he brought us a box. Toast and gravy, containing every now and then a bit of left-over meat, stand for lunch on washday, while ground meat sandwiches are symbols of Sunday night suppers, eaten chairlessly and untidily in the kitchen.

Hot dogs and Holloway suckers I have long associated with castor oil. Olives and watermelons I remember with displeasure. I did not particularly mind disliking olives, for they were merely a side dish, but I resented deeply the injustice of serving anything so tasteless as watermelon under the name of dessert.

With all food, I believed in saving

the best till the last. I always ate the crust of my pie after the nose, and pushed the fruit to the side of my salad plate in order to finish my lettuce first. I almost made a game with bananas and cake. After the initial bite and the inevitable "Mm, it's good"! uttered somewhat indistinctly from a mouth half full—after these, my interest in the bite being consumed lessened, as I made plans for the last morsel. Half way down the banana I must peel off the skin, to make sure that there was not a bad spot on the tip. I must be careful to save the heel of the cake; the icing was so thick there. As I tasted that last bite, I felt a thrill at its perfection.

Whenever I see Tootsie rolls or candy bananas, I see also the little store where we spent our pennies. Grandma Leash's shelves held ever so many kinds of candy. As an experiment, we invested one cent in each kind, then selected a few favorites to patronize exclusively. We bought little round peppermints to use as pills in playing hospital, licorice sticks to smoke, and red hots to smear daringly upon our lips. And once we bought a chocolate rabbit.

It was Easter morning. We children had come home after Sunday school; the others were at church. Betty and I stood before the buffet in the dining room, admiring the chocolate bunny which was to be the prize for our egg hunt that afternoon. I was sorely tempted to break off the little shreds along the edges. It smelled delicious. We drew closer. And then the tragedy occurred. One of us—we never knew which—jiggled the buffet, and the bunny fell over in a hundred pieces. We were terrified. Suppose the corner store were not open! If we went to the drug store we would run the risk of being discovered, for Dad knew the man who ran it.

Betty called the others and explained, "If each of us gives a cent," she said bravely, concealing her anxiety, "we can divide the pieces into



fifths and get another bunny." They agreed, and I ran all the way to the corner store, so that I would get back before the rest of the family. My relief was great when I saw that the store was open. Grandma Leash seemed rather surprised at my buying anything so artistic as a chocolate rabbit; usually we paid more attention to caloric value than to appearance. But I offered no explanation. And though the new bunny was hollow, and probably made of less expensive chocolate than the other, nobody guessed the exchange that had taken place. Our little tragedy turned into a feast.

Mother's teas were as delightful on the back stairs as in the living room. When we were sure that the kitchen was deserted, Roberta and I crept in. We scraped out the crumbs that lay deep in the pan of the devil's-food-cake-with-date-and-nut-filling; we spread the nut bread crusts thick with butter; we rejoiced in the macaroons that had been rejected because they stuck together. We helped ourselves to loaf sugar, lemon ends, and any nut meats that might have fallen on the floor. Halfway up the back stairs we munched daintily, trying not to grimace as we bit into unsugared lemon, and addressing each other in cultured tones as "Mrs." and "Madam," as though we were fine ladies at a fashionable tea. Sometimes we adorned ourselves fittingly with finery from our collection of ribbons and laces. Sometimes we invited a guest or two from across the street. It was really the best way to entertain, for everyone agreed that the food was more important than anything else; and at our own parties the refreshments were hopelessly commonclass.

Ice cream molds remind me of the first wedding at our house. We served them at the reception, and for breakfast, lunch, and dinner during the next few days. Strangely enough I found myself tired of ice cream. It was usually a great treat, and was most frequently offered when we went

riding in the Buick. Ice cream cones were always in the back of my mind when we started out, though I would have been ashamed to mention them. Roberta, however, who sat in the front seat, often whispered in Dad's ear something which caused him to stop at the next drug store, and bring out two handfuls of cones. It was fun to lick the ice cream lightly at first, then to force it deeper into the cone with your tongue; to eat as slowly as you could, so that when everyone else had finished you still had a little left.

I cannot imagine our old basement without a barrel of apples in the corner; or a church supper without meat loaf and soggy pudding; or a fudgeless Sunday afternoon. I hope that concentrated food tablets are never perfected. It would be a shame to deprive childhood of the pleasures of eating.

## There Was a Crooked Man

By

M. Eddingfield

"There was a crooked man, and he  
went a crooked mile,

He found a crooked sixpence against  
a crooked stile;

He bought a crooked cat, which  
caught a crooked mouse,

And they all lived together in a little  
crooked house."

For years I have been vaguely perplexed as to the identity of the Crooked Man, and only recently did I stumble on to a satisfying solution for this question retained from my childhood days. It was quite a surprise, I assure you, to bump into it so suddenly. Of course, I had always cherished a vivid imaginary picture of the fellow. He was small and lean and crooked. His crooked little eyes looked out from beneath crooked brows. He had a